

*Wow! Narbonne.....
and the Canal de la Robine*



Narbonne was a lovely surprise as we sailed right into the heart of the city under its bridges which were absolutely *laden* with flower baskets. A fantastic location opposite what they say is the most beautiful art deco market building in France. A small, university town, (pop. 52,500), it is buzzing with life, has vibrant cafés, Roman monuments and a maze of narrow shopping streets. We had our first very welcome visitor here (Peter- ship's doctor and lock master!) plus an unwelcome, nocturnal visitor for the first time ever in the form of a stoned student who leapt onto the boat roof, stumbled about and was lucky not to fall in the canal. This was also where Peter introduced us to the excellent, local white asparagus, complemented by the excellent local white wines! We loved it here. 20 km further down the canal, you reach the Med!



The Aude in full flow after heavy rainstorms. We were stopped from crossing the mere 50 metres we needed to reach the canal.



Branching off from the Canal du Midi is the lovely, tranquil Canal de la Robine with the cosiest restaurant.. We headed back up, and were stopped for a night by the Aude in full flow. While waiting, we met three pals who had just bought their next restoration project- an old oak fishing boat that had sunk at the coast. After having been submerged for a week, they lifted her out and voila the old engine started like a dream! If I were able to write a TV series, this would be it- a "Last of the Summer Wine" on the water! Appearances can be deceptive though. One of these charming gentlemen had skippered luxury yachts in the Caribbean after having been in the Merchant Navy. We rescued his hat from the canal. Twinkly eyes, and full of fun, they each live on old barges they are currently restoring (forever). And what do you do when you get stranded unexpectedly? Evidement! You call the wife who arrives with a luxury picnic.



See you next year, Peter!